

REMARKS

This is in response to the Official Action currently outstanding with respect to the above-identified application, which Official Action the Examiner has designated as being FINAL.

Claims 1-2, 5-6 and 9-18 were present in this application as of the time of the issuance of the currently outstanding FINAL Official Action. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10 stand allowed. Claims 11-14 and 17 currently stand rejected by the Examiner. By the foregoing Amendment, Applicants propose that Claims 11, 16 and 17 be amended. Applicants propose that no new claims be added, and that Claims 12-15 and 18 be canceled. Accordingly, in the event that the Examiner grants the entry to the foregoing Amendment, Claims 1-2, 5-6, 9-11 and 16-17 as hereinabove amended will constitute the claims under active prosecution in this application.

The foregoing Amendment sets forth the wording of all of the claims currently pending in this application as it will stand in the event that the Examiner grants the entry of this Amendment as required by the Rules.

More specifically, it is noted that in the currently outstanding Official Action, the Examiner has:

1. Acknowledged Applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 USC §119(a)-(d), and reconfirm that the required certified copies of the priority document have been received by the United States Patent and Trademark Office.
2. Indicated that the drawings filed on 20 December 2001 have been accepted.
3. Indicated that Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10 are allowed.
4. Finally rejected Claims 11-14 and 17 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Ikeda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,067,284).

5. Indicated that Claims 15, 16 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but that those claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims.

Further comment in these Remarks regarding items 1-3 above is not considered to be necessary in these Remarks.

With respect to items 4 and 5, Applicant by the foregoing Amendment proposes that the present application be amended so as to adopt the Examiner's suggestion that the subject matter of Claims 15, 16 and 18 be presented in independent form. Specifically, Claim 15 depends from Claim 14 which depends from Claim 13 which depends from Claim 12 which depends from Claim 11. Accordingly, the foregoing Amendment proposes that present Claim 11 be rewritten so as to include all of the limitations of present Claims 12-15, and that present Claims 12-15 be canceled, without prejudice. Further, present Claim 16 depends from present Claim 11. Accordingly, the foregoing Amendment proposes that Claim 16 be rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of Claim 11. Finally, present Claim 18 depends from present Claim 17. Accordingly, the present Amendment proposes that present Claim 17 be amended so as to include all of the limitations of present Claim 18, and that present Claim 18 be canceled, without prejudice.

Applicants respectfully submit that the foregoing Amendment is effectively the same as a rewriting of present Claims 15, 16 and 18 in independent form including all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. Applicants have chosen to amend Claim 11 instead of Claim 15 and to amend Claim 17 instead of Claim 18 in the present amendment solely because it was deemed to be more convenient logistically to combine the respective subject matters of Claims 11-15 and 17-18 in that manner. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims that would be present in this application in the event that the Examiner grants entry to the foregoing Amendment (i.e., Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 16 and 17) are in condition for allowance according to the Examiner's statements in the Official Action of 7 October 2005 in this application.

Applicant: J. Akiyama
USSN: 10/029,363
Page 12

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the foregoing Amendment be entered and that this application as so amended be allowed in response to this communication.

Applicant believes that additional fees are not required in connection with the consideration of this response to the currently outstanding Official Action. However, if for any reason a fee is required, a fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, you are hereby authorized and requested to charge and/or credit Deposit Account No. **04-1105**, as necessary, for the correct payment of all fees which may be due in connection with the filing and consideration of this communication.

Respectfully submitted,

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Reg. No. 27,840

Tel. No. (617) 517-5508

Customer No. 21874

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SIGNATURE OF PRACTITIONER

David A. Tucker
(type or print name of practitioner)
Attorney for Applicant

Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP
P. O. Box 55874
P.O. Address

Boston, MA 02205